

HOUSE No. 2812

By Mrs. Parente of Milford, petition of Marie J. Parente and others relative to safety inspections of foster homes licensed by the Office of Child Care Services and the Department of Social Services. Children and Families.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PETITION OF:

Marie J. Parente	Christine E. Canavan
Carol A. Donovan	Stanley C. Rosenberg
Paul J. Donato	Elizabeth A. Poirier

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO SAFETY INSPECTIONS OF FOSTER HOMES LICENSED BY THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

- 1 Chapter 119 of the Mass. General Laws is hereby amended by
- 2 adding, at the end of section 23, the following new section:—
- 3 Section 23I: Prior to the final approval by the department, or by
- 4 any private service agency contracted to provide such service, of
- 5 an application for the provision of foster care or adoptive care that
- 6 requires licensing or approval of a foster home, the department, in
- 7 conjunction with the Office of Child Care Services, shall notify
- 8 local safety officials, fire department officials, and building
- 9 inspectors, in the area in which the residence is located, that such
- 10 application is pending.
- 11 Subject to local regulatory provisions, no residence may be
- 12 approved or licensed as a foster or adoptive home until required
- 13 inspections and codes have been conducted and the home has
- 14 been approved by local fire safety officials and inspectors.
- 15 The department shall provide a list of all foster and adoptive
- 16 homes to appropriate safety and building inspection officials, and

17 fire officials of all communities in which such residences or facilities are located within the commonwealth. Upon receipt of an application for approval or licensure of a potential foster or adoptive home, and prior to the placement of any child or children in the home, the department, as part of its licensing evaluation and review, shall determine whether or not there exists in the home any animals or reptiles that pose a real or potential threat or endangerment to a foster or adoptive child or children who could be placed in the home. In addition to said evaluation, the department shall inquire of the applicants or any other persons residing in the prospective foster or adoptive home, if there are any animals or reptiles kept in the home at the present time, or whether or not there are any future plans for keeping animals or reptiles in the home to be licensed. If dangerous animals or reptiles are kept in the home or there are plans to keep such animals, the department shall not license the home, nor place any children therein, until such time as the animals or reptiles are removed.

34 The department, in conjunction with appropriate authorities and officials, shall develop and maintain a list of animals or reptiles that are considered to pose a real or potential threat or endangerment to foster or adoptive children. Such list shall be included in the “Standards for DSS Foster/Adoptive Families” and “Physical Requirements for Foster/Pre-Adoptive Homes” used by the department in the approval or licensing of such